

Cancer services in Wales continue to improve

The NHS in Wales is diagnosing and treating more patients for cancer within target time than ever before. An additional 1,800 people were treated within target time compared to five years ago.

Despite demand for cancer services rising at around 1.5% a year, the Annual Statement shows performance has remained stable over the past few years and there have been improvements in some areas.

The statement shows in 2016/17:

- Of these, 15,912 (93%) were treated within target. This is 1,705 (12%) more than five years ago (2011-12)
- For the first time more than 72% of people diagnosed with cancer between 2010 and 2014 survived at least one year
- The Wales cancer patient experience survey showed 93% of respondents rated their care positively
- Key workers were allocated in 86% of cases compared to 66% in 2013.

Speaking ahead of his keynote address at the Wales Cancer Conference in Cardiff, Vaughan Gething said:

“As life expectancy increases, more of us will develop cancer in our lifetime.

“Cancer has become the single biggest cause of premature death in Wales and the UK. We need to educate and support people to reduce their risk of developing cancer, by quitting smoking, improving diets and levels of physical activity, as well as reducing harmful drinking and UV exposure. We must not forget that around 4-in-10 cancers are potentially preventable.

“For people who develop cancer we need to ensure the service are there to support them and treat them. We will continue to invest in cancer services and work with the NHS to improve the quality of care and patient outcomes.

“In order to achieve this, we have been working hard to ensure that all cancer patients have timely and appropriate treatment. This has involved considerable work over recent years and the development of a new single cancer pathway.

“Today I would like to move that debate on and expect all health boards, in addition to improving performance on the two existing pathways, to start shadow reporting the new single pathway for cancer.

“The new pathway will start from the point of suspicion of cancer for all patients. If the new pathway proves to be successful and there is confidence it is a better way of measuring cancer waiting times, then our ambition is to replace the two current waiting times targets with this new single cancer pathway. We will listen carefully to patients and clinicians before making any changes.

“The proposals have been clinically led and have wide support across the clinical community. We hope the new way of measuring people’s waits for cancer treatment will help NHS bodies to improve performance, quality and the efficiency of cancer services.

“Today’s report and the announcement of the new pathway are part of our wider approach to improving cancer services. Our over-arching ambition is to close the gap in outcomes with our international peers. To achieve this, we have in place significant focus on waiting times, service reform and detecting more cancers at earlier, more treatable stages.”

Mark Drakeford responds to the UK government’s Autumn Budget

The Autumn Budget includes approximately £1bn of additional capital funding for Wales between 2017-18 and 2020-21 – but more than half of this must be repaid to the UK Treasury.

The UK Budget also includes additional revenue funding of £215m for the period 2017-18 to 2019-20.

Finance Secretary Mark Drakeford said:

“While these small increases in the resources available to Wales are to be welcomed as they will help support our priorities, this additional funding will do little to ease the pressures on frontline public services, which have been struggling to cope as a result of the successive cuts to our budget we have experienced since 2010-11.

“Even with this additional funding, the Welsh Government’s budget will be 5% lower in real terms in 2019-20 than it was in 2010-11.

“As a result of the measures the Chancellor announced today the funding Wales receives from the block grant will increase. But more than half of this increase is in the form of funding which must be

paid back to the UK Treasury. £650m of the additional capital funding is in the form of financial transactions – this is a form of capital funding which must be repaid to the Treasury and there are tight restrictions on what it can be spent on.”

The Finance Secretary said the budget was also a missed opportunity to provide additional investment in infrastructure to support the economy during this period of uncertainty.

Professor Drakeford said:

“The Office for Budget Responsibility has confirmed the UK economy has slowed markedly and its growth forecasts have again been revised downwards. In my recent letter to the Chief Secretary to the Treasury, I urged the UK government to listen to the International Monetary Fund and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development to take advantage of low interest rates and invest in economic infrastructure.

“This is why we called on the UK government to commit to important infrastructure projects in Wales, including the Swansea Bay tidal lagoon. Once again the UK government has failed Wales by failing to invest in key projects.”

He added that the UK Budget gave little detail regarding additional funding about UK government plans to cut the public sector pay cap and give public sector workers a much-needed pay rise.

“The Welsh Government, standing with our hard working public sector workers and trade unions, has repeatedly called on the UK government to lift the public sector pay cap and provide additional funding to give workers across the UK the pay rise they deserve. I was clear this must be fully funded.

“Today’s Budget was a missed opportunity to do this for all public sector workers. For NHS staff who are waiting the outcome of the independent pay review body, I expect the Chancellor to honour his commitment to fund any pay recommendations in full and to provide a full Barnett consequential.”

The Cabinet Secretary also said there must now be discussions between the Welsh and UK governments about the UK government’s intention to explore a tax on plastics – the Welsh Government is currently investigating a disposable plastic tax as one of 4 new tax ideas.

“I am pleased the UK government is taking our lead in considering how to use taxation to change behaviour in areas such as disposable

plastic.

“I announced a tax on disposable plastic as part of the shortlist of proposed taxes in October, I expect to discuss this in detail with the UK government as part of its evidence gathering.”

[Awards for the best in the Tourism industry](#)

The awards are hosted by Visit Wales to celebrate the best of the tourism industry – showcasing Wales’ tourism businesses and the industry’s achievements.

The awards ceremony will be held on Thursday, 8 March 2018 at the Celtic Manor Resort, Newport and nominations are now being invited in a range of categories.

Categories for the awards are

- Best Hotel
- Best Bed & Breakfast
- Best Self-Catering
- Best Caravan, Camping or Glamping,
- Best Attraction
- Best Activity
- Best Event
- Best Place to Eat
- Best Destination
- Young Tourism Person of the Year
- Tourism Business Innovation Award.

The winners from regionally hosted awards will go through to the National Awards in March. The Tourism Minister, Dafydd Elis-Thomas, attended the North Wales Tourism Awards last week, where some of the first regional entries to the National Awards were announced.

Speaking about the awards, the Tourism Minister, said:

“The North Wales Tourism awards were a fantastic success and it is great to see the winners going on to compete in the Wales awards.

I’d encourage all tourism businesses across the rest of Wales to nominate themselves for these awards; the effort in entering awards can pay dividends and can be of great benefit to team and staff morale. Of course, being able to say that you’re the ‘Best in

Wales' is also a great marketing boost.

"The quality of what we have to offer here in Wales goes from strength to strength and the Awards are an opportunity for us all to celebrate the industry and to showcase the outstanding quality of our vibrant tourism sector.

"This is our opportunity to put tourism in the limelight and pay tribute to those who are committed and passionate about their businesses, tourism and Wales."

Speaking at the Go North Wales Tourism Awards last week, Managing director Jim Jones said the quality of entries this year underlined why the region was increasingly being recognised as a world class destination which generates £2.8 billion every year and employs around 40,000 people.

He said:

"It's been very successful and I congratulate all the winners. However, in my eyes every nominee is a winner and all have played a part in what has been a successful year for North Wales Tourism.

"This event really showcases the very best of North Wales and we have seen so many amazing entries. A number of the winners will now go forward to represent North Wales at the Visit Wales National Awards in 2018 and I wish them every success."

Tourism businesses can nominate themselves or anyone can enter a business which they deem as a worthy winner. Further information is available [here](#) (external link). The closing date for applications is Friday, 12 January 2018.

[Child burial fees will no longer apply in Wales](#)

The Welsh Government has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with local government to stop charging for the burial of children, ensuring there is a clear, fair and consistent approach across Wales.

To support local authorities in making this step, the Welsh Government is making up to £1.5m available between now and 2020. This funding will also be available to all other providers of cemeteries and crematoria in Wales who agree not to charge on the same basis.

The MOU comes into force with immediate effect and the First Minister is urging councils to ratify the agreement as soon as possible.

The First Minister said:

“We must do all we can to support families who have lost a child. I am pleased we are able to work with local authorities to take away just one of the stresses and strains on the shoulders of grieving parents during a hugely distressing time.

“Today’s commitment will also end the unfairness caused by charging different fees across Wales and I am grateful to the WLGA and One Voice Wales for their support.”

Mr Lyn Cadwallader, Chief Executive of One Voice Wales said:

“We have worked in collaboration with Welsh Government and WLGA colleagues in implementing this important government policy – when we surveyed the community and town council sector there was overwhelming support to scrap child burial fees.

“It is hard to comprehend how difficult it must be for grieving families to cope with this tragic circumstance. The introduction of this approach will take away any unnecessary stress and help to ease the pain of grieving families.”

Councillor Debbie Wilcox, WLGA Leader said:

“Local government is very pleased to be able to help to support families who are going through the most difficult period in their lives. Losing a child is a harrowing experience and a trauma that will stay with families throughout their lives. We are pleased to be working with Welsh Government to ensure that there is fairness and consistency in this regard in all areas of Wales.”

Appointment to the Education Workforce Council

The EWC was formed in April 2015, following the introduction of the Education (Wales) Act 2014. The EWC are responsible for:

- establishing and maintaining a Register of school teachers, Further Education (FE) teachers, school and FE learning support workers, youth workers, youth support workers and work based learning practitioners
- reviewing and revising the Code of Professional Conduct & Practice
- investigating and hearing cases involving the fitness to practise of registered persons
- on request, advising Welsh Ministers and others on a range of professional matters including standards of conduct and practice; professional roles and standing; training, career development and performance management; recruitment, retention and supply related to registered education practitioners
- accredit courses or programmes of initial school teacher education (ITE)
- monitor the compliance of accredited courses or programmes of ITE with Welsh Government published criteria
- withdrawing the accreditation of courses or programmes of ITE.

The Education Workforce Council (Appointments and Membership) (Wales) Regulations 2014 provides for membership of the EWC is to consist of not less than 14 members. Seven members would be directly appointed by Welsh Ministers and seven members would be appointed by Welsh Ministers having being nominated by organisations listed in the Schedule of the 2014 Regulations.

This post is not remunerated and members of the ECW are not paid, however, they are reimbursed for reasonable travel and subsistence costs. Members have a typical time commitment of 10-12 days per year.

The Cabinet Secretary for Education said:

“I am pleased that Mrs Jones has agreed to work on the EWC; I am sure she will bring a wealth of knowledge and experience to her role as Council member.”

These appointments were made in accordance with the Governance Code on Public Appointments.

All appointments are made on merit and political activity plays no part in the selection process. However, in accordance with the original Nolan recommendations, there is a requirement for the political activity of appointees (if any declared) to be published.

This individual had carried out political activities in the last five years that relates to canvassing on behalf of the Labour party.